ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF KHADI INDUSTRY IN TIRHUT

BY

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Khadi, i. e. cloth made from handloom spun yarn is not only a symbol of plain living and high thinking but is a sou: ce of employment. It is the most organised cottage industry in the state o Bihar employing nearly 10 lakhs of persons. This industry is an important section of the national economy as a source of livelihood to a considerable proportion of rural and urban population. This is a subsidiary occupation to agriculturists in off time and is a solution in part of employment and a complementary source of income in agriculturally poor tracts.

From the time immemorial, Khadi industry formed the principal cottage industry in Tirhut. Darbhanga was one of the few districts of the old Bengal presidency where cotton weaving was still comparatively an important industry. Madhubani was a famous centre of the manufacture of malmal cloth, and its kokati malmal or addhi malmal (Khadi-Silk) had a distinct p'ace of its own in the popular markets of India and abroad. Even foreign cloth of high quality paled into insignificance in comparison with this most popular cloth of Mithilā or Tirhut.[1]

The cloth derived its name from the species of cotton of which it was made—*Kokati-banga* cotton (gossypium herbaccum) which was indigenous to the Sub-division. The cloth turned out was naturally of a brown colour, resembling tusser silk both in colour and texture. It is said that the best quality equalled, if it did not surpass, good brown Holland, and that it could well be worn as a summer dress. The manufacture was tragically allowed to languish for want of State patronage and also owing to the competition of the mill piece-goods.[2]

The Swadeshi movement, vigorously launched and encouraged by the Indian National Congress, however, once again revived this dying indigenous industry. A new life was infused and the spinning wheel (Charkha) and takali found an honourable place in almost all the houses of Tirhut. Consequently khadi-centres were established and organised

1 Thakur, U., Socio-Economic Life in Mithila Under the Khandwalas, *JBRS*, Vol. XLVIII, prs. I-IV, Section II, p.48.

2 O'Mally, L. S. S., Darbhanga D. G. (Patna), p. 93.

at Madhudani, Kamataul, Pandaul, and other places. But the big gap in the prices of Khadi and mill made cloths soon affected this industry adversely.[3]

The modern development of "organised Khadi indusary" began in Tirhut from the year 1921 when Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi became the undisputed leader of the freedom struggle. Gandhiji realised that the decline of traditional crafts had impoverished the villages. He propagated the gospel of Khadi which in one stroke buttressed the demand for ancient crafts and the boycott of British goods. This was the cry that contributed as much to "village revival".[4] Therefore, in Tirhut Khadi centres were re-grouped during the year 1921 and mentions must be made of six centres, viz, Madhubani, Kapasia, Sakri, Madhepur and Pupri beside Malkachak.

For the development purpose of Khadi and other allied needs of the country the All India Congress Committee next met at Bezwada in the Madras Presidency on the 31st March and 1st April, 1921. The Committee recommended the followiog two resolutions[5] :—

(i) The collection of one crore of rupees for Swarajya Fund.

(ii) Introduction of 20 lakhs of charkhas, quotas being fixed in proportion of provincial population.

The following are the ratios fixed for each State[6] :—

State	Men	Money	Charkhas
Bihar	9,42,000	9,42,000	1,88,000
Madras	6,50,000	6,50,000	1,30,000
Andhra	6,82,000	6.82,000	1,36,000
Karnatak	3,90,000	3,90,000	78,000
Kerala	2,27,000	2,27,000	45,000
Bombay	32,500	32,000	6,000
Maharashtra	3,90,000	3,90,000	78,000
Gujrat	3,57,000	3,57,000	71,000
Sindh	1,30,000	1,30,000	26,000
U. P.	15,92,000	15,92,000	3,18,000
Punjab	8,77,000	8,77,000	1,76,000
N. W. F.	97,500	97,500	20,000
Delhi	32,500	32,500	6,000
Ajmer-Merwara	6,17,000	6,17,000	1,23,000

3 *JBRS*, Vol. XL VIII, p. 48.

4 India's Cottage Indusiries, published by Village and Khadi Industries Commission, Bomby, p. 6.

5 Sitaramayya, B. P., *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I, p. 212.

6 Datta, K. K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, (Patna, 1657), pp. 368-69,

C.P. (Hindi)	2,92,000	2,92,000	58,000
C.P. (Marathi)	97,500	97,500	19,400
Berar	97,500	97,500	19,400
Utkal	4,87,000	4,87,000	97,000
Bengal	15,27,000	15,27,000	3,05,000
Assam	1,30,000	1,30,000	26,000
Burma	3,90,000	3,90,000	78,000
Surma Valley	97,000	97,000	19,000
Total	101,34,500	101,34,500	20,23,000

On analysation of the above statistics, it appears that as Tirhut is the most densely populated division of Bihar, it might have been allotted with the maximum number of the charkhas and it must have consumed the heaviest amount of money in this respect.

An another important sitting of the All India Congress Committee took place in July, 1921, in Bombay on the 28tb, 29th, and 30th. The feeling of the country was one of universal jubilation at the success of the Bezwada programme. The Tilak Swarajya Fund was over subscribed by about 15 lakhs of rupees. The membersip did not reach much over half the prescribed figure but the charkhas came up nearly to the figure of 20 lakhs throughout India. The next thing was naturally to turn the country's attention to weaving and the accessory crafts of spinning and carding. To this end a complete boycott of foreign cloth was the subject for the country to concentrate on, coupled with the manufacture of khaddar. The All India Congress Committee further advised that "all persons belonging to the Congress shall discard the use of foreign cloth, as from the first day of August".[7]

On the 16th August, 1921, a meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held in the Sadaqat Ashram at Patna. The Committee recommended eighteen resolutions of which the most important regarding boycott of foreign cloth was the following[8] :—

"In the opinion of the working committee, in order to give full effect to the resolution of the All India Congress Committee on swadeshi, to bring about an effective boycott of foreign cloth before the 30th September, it is necessary to collect foreign cloth from every house and to set apart volunteers under proper control for that purpose. In order to cope with the demand for khaddar that must arise from the boycott, it

7 Sitaramayya, B., P., *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I. p. 214.
8 Datta, K. K., *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 382-383.

is also necessary for every Provincial Congress Committee to set apart and spend not less than one-fourth of the whole collections made in that Province for the All India Tilak Swarajya Fund, to organise the spread of hand spinning, the collection of hand spun yarn, weaving of khaddar and distribution thereof. The working committee advises all workers to concentrate chiefly on boycott and manufacture and invites the Provincial Congress Committee to send telegraphic weekly reports to the Working Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, giving the production of khaddar, the quantity distributed, the number of shops selling foreign cloth closed, and of such shopkeepers who may have undertaken to stop selling foreign cloth by the 30th September, and the number of shopkeepers stocking khaddar". A systematic efforts were made to foster the use of swadeshi cloths and charkhas and "forty eight depots were opened in eleven districts of the Province to place cotton and charkhas within easy reach of the people. In most districts the sale of swadeshi cloth was reported to have increased considerbly".[9]

The 16th session of the Bihari students' conference met at Hazaribagh on the 5th and 6th October, 1921, under the presidentship of Shrimati Sarala Devi. The conference passed the following resolutions regarding khadi[10] :—

(i) That students should devote at least half an hour every working day and two hours every sunday to the spinning of yarn;

(ii) Requiring every students to boycott foreign cloth and use khaddar only;

(iii) Commending the action of those students who had offered their services as volunteers for propaganda work.

Meanwhile the Champaran District Congress Committee, held its annual conference at Bettiah on the 12th November, 1921. The President of the conference Shri Deep Narain Singh made the following significant observation in his speech[11] :—

"When this movement (charkhas) would become as successful as we want, then I would be in a position to say that Champaran in Bihar would be the first district to have the honour of adopting civil disobedience. As a matter of fact, Champaran must take the lead in civil disobedience as it was the district where the Mahatma came first. You

9 Bamford, P. C., *Non-Co-operation and Khilafat Movement in Bihar and Orissa*, (1925) p. 67.

10 *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, Vol. I, pp. 394-96.

11 *Ibid*., pp. 398-99.

should therefore try to reach the goal of all....The public of Champaran is eager to follow civil disobedience and no doubt it is their right as the Mahatma had started the movement for this very district in Bihar, but before they inter into the battle of civil disobedience, they will have to pass all the ages of Non-Co-operation movement, especially swadeshi."

As several places in Bihar, Tirhut division also had the constructive items, laid down by the Bardoli resolution, which were being tackled in the right earnest. For example, in the Dighwara thana of the Saran district there were then about seven thousand spinning wheels and five to six thousand looms in working order. On the 10th December, 1921, the Congress and volunteers' offices at various centres had been rigorously searched, and their registers, and other records relating to the Non-Co-operation movement, were seized and indiscriminately destroyed. Within a few days, the Congress office at Sonepur was "looted by the police under supervision of a European Superintendent of police and all office records, papers and khaddar in stock found therein were set on fire and burnt, volunteers were assaulted and their flags and vests of khaddar were torn and snatched away".[12]

During the year 1922 the introduction of the improved charkhas had met with most encouraging success. This charkhas was the most important mechanical improvement in hand weaving, the means of potential doubling of output to the weaver. In the Madhubani subdivison carpenters had been trained by the demonstration parties to manufacture charkhas, and that had helped to make the use of the improved charkhas in that area independent of the presence of demonstration parties.[13] Slowly a separate Board called the "All India Khadi Board" was established in December 1923, in the thirty eight annual session of the Congress which was held at Cocanada from 28th to 31st December under the Presidentship of Maulana Muhammad Ali.[14] This continued to be an integral part of the Congress organisation and working under its direction and supervision. The year 1924 also deserves special notice for the spread of Khadi work in Tirhut. Shri Rajendra Prasad also engaged himself in constructive works particularly national education and spread of Khadi. On the 19th February, 1924, Shri Nil Kanta Chatterjee moved a resolution in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council to the effect that in all public schools arrangements be made for teaching boys and girls above

12 *Ibid*; p. 404.

13 Prior, M. C.; *Bihar and Orissa in 1922*. pp. 59-60.

14 Report of the Working Group on Khadi and Village Industries, September, 1964, p. 147.

the age of ten the art of spinning by charkhas, and later on, this resolution had been strongly supported with many others and it was passed. In December, 1924, a Khadi exhibition was held at Patna under the guidence of Shri Rajendra Prasad in which in the charkhas competition two boys of Malkhachak Gandhi Kutir (Saran) got the first prize.[15]

In 1925 the All India Spinners Association (A. I. S. A.), also known as the *Akhil Bharat Charkha Sangh* was formed. Though this body was closely associated with the Indian National Congress, it was completely autonomous in its working. As Darbhanga district was specially famous for Khadi production, office and the chief depot of the Bihar Branch of A. I. S. A. was shifted from Patna to Muzaffarpur, and again for comparative convenience to Madhubani, where gradually the Charkha Sangh constructed its own buildings.[16] In February, 1925, a Bihar correspondent wrote to Mahatma Gandhi about the progress of Khadi work in Bihar till then[17] :—

"There was a meeting of the Bihar P. C C. on 25th January. The majority of members registered themselves as self spinning members. And the workers from different districts undertook to secure before 31st March next 3000 self spinning members. The programme for the whole year is to secure at least 13000 self-spinning members. It is expected the sufficient cotton will be collected as a donation for supplying self spinning members who cannot afford to find their own cotton. During my peregrinations I have noticed that the quality of yarn and khaddar has steadily improved and centrlisation through the Khaddar-Board has ensured comparatively greater efficiency and accuracy. The following are the production centre with the average monthly output of khaddar marked against them :—

Pandol	Rs. 3,000
Garol	Rs. 1,500
Hajipur	Rs. 500

There are three selling depots as follows :—

Muzaffarpur	Rs. 2,500
Hajipur	Rs. 500
Patna	Rs. 2,000

Thus you will observe that the sales balance the production. But this is not all the production, nor all the consumption. There are many

15 Dutta, K. K., *op. cit.* pp. 463-64.
16 Prasad, R., *Ātmakathā*, p. 226.
17 Datta, K. K., *Writings and Speeches of Gandhi jee relating to Bihar* (Patna, 1960), p. 171-72.

spinners who spin to cloth themselves. Though I have no statistics to show the quantity of yarn thus spun and khaddar woven, there must be hundreds who are clothing themselves in this manner. The Gandhi Ashram is a model centre for spinning. I was surprised to notice the wonderful way in which the lads aged 12 were working here. They not only card and spin well but also receive yarn from spinners on hire, test the yarn, pay them wages and take the yarn to the weavers. They can do all this work efficiently and methodically. The quality of its khaddar shows clear improvement upon 1922. The Ashram has the following producing centres :—

Madhubani	Rs. 7.000
Malkachak	Rs. 600
Madhupur	Rs. 500

The following are the sale depots :—

Madhubani	Rs. 1,500
Bhagalpur	Rs. 1,100
Malkachak	Rs. 500
Jamui	Ro. 500

The P. C. C. proposes this year to produce khaddar worth at least five lacs of rupees. The present monthly production is Rs. 13,000. If they are to manufacture .five lacs, the monthly production must be trebled. Rajendra Babu is enthusiastic about it. The natural facilities in Bihar are great. I should not therefore wonder if the programme is carried out. The people here are anxiously looking forward to your visit. If you can come, the work will certainly receive a great push."

On the 4th March, 1926, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, sent the following letter to Mahatma Gandhi about the Khadi work which was visited by him[18] :—

"I have just returned after a visit to one of the production centres under the A. I. S. A. in Bihar. The place is in the District of Darbhanga and is known as Pandaul. There are two kinds of khadi produced in Darbhanga District, the ordinary white khadi and the fine saffron coloured khadi known as kokti. Between January 1925 and January 1926, the total amount of white khadi produced was 91,986 yards on which the weaving charges amounted to Rs. 11,604 and the spinning wages came approximately to Rs. 10,202. With regard to the spinning wages I have said, approximately because no account of it is kept separately, as the system in vogue there is not to purchase yarn for cash but to

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 207-9.

exchange it for one and half times its weight in cotton for yarn of 8 to 10 counts and for more or less respectively in the case of higher or lower counts. Yarn of 20 counts and more is purchased for cash. There is a large number of weavers in the locality and in order that they may be kept supplied with yarn, the Pandaul production depot has three yarn exchange centres and the figures for week ending 16th or 17th February on which date Babu Satishchandra Das Gupta and I visited these exchange centres are still more striking.

Chhatwan

Cotton exchanged			Yarn			Difference			Wages
Mds.	Srs.	Ch.	Mds.	Srs.	Ch.	Mds.	Srs.	Ch.	Rs. A. P.
38	33	14	25	29	8	13	35	6	426-3-2
8	10	10	5	20	12	2	29	14	89-5-0
8	32	11	5	37	4	2	35	7	9-12-6
55	37	3	37	7	8	19	20	11	525-5-6

The weaving wages paid within the same week at Padaul came to Rs. 348-5-9; the total amounts of wages paid to spinners and weavers thus comes to Rs. 956-11-3 in one week. It may be said without fear of contradiction that the sum of Rs. 10,202 earned by spinners in 1925 and January 1926 represents their earning for light work done during leisure hours, as not one of them has been withdrawn from other works and similarly the sum of Rs. 608 being distributed now every week in this centre alone represents the earnings of off hours. Rajendra Babu further adds that the majority of the spinners are Mussalman women. I wish he had given the number of spinners among whom over Rs. 600 are being distributed weekly. But there is little difficulty in discovering the number as the average earning per week from the use of spare hours cannot be more than eight annas. Therefore, at least 1,200 needy women are being served in only three centres. There are to my knowledge hundreds of such centres which can be opened if we have men and money. Unfortunately there is dearth of both and more of men than of money. By judicious begging, money can be collected, but equally easily by workers of the right sort. But the facts that are being daily collected show that it is merely a question of time when hand-spinning must become universal. During the transition stage we must concentrate upon the centres that are already working and make them self-supporting and permanent by effective organisation. The cry for cotton must be satisfied. And that can only be done by moneyed men coming out with donations in cash or kind. The All India Deshabandhu Memorial is not

being responded to as it should largely because collection has been suspended.

The period from October, 1926 to September, 1927, opened with large stock of khadi in the stores at different places in Tirhut which reduce the liquid capital in the hands of the workers and necessitated the curtailment of production. During the year under review the important khadi stores were Bahera, Bettiah, Chapra, Darbhanga, Dholi Gorul, Hajibur, Madhubani, Mairwa, Muzaffarpur, Pandaul, Pupri, Sitamarhi, Samastipur and Gopalganj etc. Difficulties were experienced in restarting the charkhas which had been stopped for inability of the workers to take the yarn and these were aggravated to a certain extent as a result of the Hindu-Muslim riots which had unfortunately taken place last year in the district of Darbhanga, the area where the largest numbers of khadi production centre were situated and which supplied the bulk of yarn required for it. But Mahatma Gandhiji's tour gave considerable impetus to khadi work. Besides speaking in large gatherings on the utility of khadi, the desirability of removing untouchability and other cognate subjects, he also hawked khadi in these public meetings.[19] This enhanced the demand for khadi, and not only was accumulated stock cleared but several depots began to have increased sale. It should be noted that to popularise khadi, exhibitions[20] were held in 1926 at different places in the Tirhut division, as elsewhere in the state of Bihar.

During the year 1927-28, there were greater number of looms woven cotton, but silk and wool were also woven. The Madhubani Subdivision of the Darbhanga district was famous for producing the well known kokati cloth, the yarn far which was spun by hand from a local variety of brown tree cotton. Its neighbourhood, Bhagalpur town (outside

19 On January, 11, 1927, Gandhiji's tour started. "I have come here to do business to collect money for charkha and Khadi and to sell khadi. Who knows, this may be my last visit to Bihar? Let me do as much business as I can". The result of the collections are as follows:—

Place	Purse	Collections at meeting
Sonepur	43.10.0	205-12-0
Chapra	... ...	358-10-4½
Ekma	... ...	352-12.4½
Maharajganj	575.0.0	372-11-9
Dalsingsarai	2,000-0.8	310-11-10½

(Tendulkar, D. G., Mahatma, Vol. II, Bombay, 1951, pp, 329-30 and Writings and Speeches of Gandhiji, p. 215).

20 *Freedom Movement in Bihar*, pp. 491-92.

the jurisdiction of Tirhut) 'was famous for *bafta* cloth (a mixture af tasar and cotton). The process of weaving were of the most primitive kind. The efforts of the department had, therefore, been directed towards the introduction of improved appliances, particularly to increase the output from the same amount of effort by at least 50%.[21] The department of Industries had undergone considerable expansion of khadi particularly the jurisdiction of Tirhut during controlling technical and industrial education, the activities of the department comprised experimental and propaganda work for the improvement of industrial methods in the staff of Bihar. Hand weaving formed an important industry both in respect of the value of output and the number of person actually supported by it. The weaving and dying demonstration parties, whose work had gone hand in hand continued their useful activities during the year under review. They respectively visited 524 and 835 new villages in the state of Bihar and Orissa. Advantage was taken of fairs and exhibitions to demonstrate improved weaving appliances and products of the Cottage Industries Institute.[22] Then the position in this textile branch of the department's activities was that its success on the commercial side was proving rather embarrassing. During the year 1931-32, the Industries Department had done useful work in helping village craftsmen to attain a much higher standards of technical knowledge and skill and it is regrettable that the demonstration parties which had toured various districts of the state had to be reduced in numbers from ten to seven owing to the financial situation. More efficient appliance and improved processes had been introduced. It was estimated that in the last ten or twelve years nearly 28,000 improved charkhas had been taken over by the hand weavers of the State. During the year under review the demonstrations were carried out in over 5,000 villages and in some places weavers had been taught to produce finer counts and cloths of modern designs. For its encouragements a weaving demonstration staff consisting of seven supervisors and 49 mistries was maintained for the whole state during the year 1933-34. During the same year an improved methods of warping and sizing was introduced. The processes of fast dyeing and printing were demonstrated in different centres by dyeing mistries. In addition, technical advice was given both by the weaving supervisors and dyeing demonstrations to private manufacturers.[23]

Till 1935, the Association concentrated its activity on propagation,

21 Jackson, J. W. C., *Bihar and Orissa in 1927-28* (Patna), p. 102.
22 Jagmohan, R., *Bihar and Orissa in 1929-30* (Patna, 1931), p. 118.
23 Wilcock, J. S., *Bihar and Orissa in 1933-34*, (Patna, 1935), p. 116.

production and sale of khadi, with the result that unwittingly the social objectives of khadi viz., the stimulation of self discipline, self sacrifice and the objectives of re-organizing, the national economy on the basis of equity, justice, and freedom receded into the background. These were again, therefore, brought to the fore by Mahatma Gandhi between 1935 and 1944. The All-India Spinners Association emphasised the role of the spinners. Gandhiji said that it was time "we begin to think of their (spinners') needs, their hours of work and leisure and standard of living".[24] Apart from the payment of standard wages Gandhiji also stressed the importance of other social objectives including, (i) self-sufficiency; (ii) decentralisation of production and consumption; (iii) establishment of personal touch with the worker in order to befriend them and bring all round improvement in their economic conditions; and (iv) cultivation of cotton practically in every village, without which according to Gandhi, khadi could never succeed. All these social objectives were given more and more prominence and culminated in the "enunciation of the doctrine of "Samagra Seva", the central theme of which was that khadi could have "a permanent effect only when carried out as a part and parcel of the wider programme of non-violent village uplift or village-re-construction".[25] The doctrine of samagra seva found eloquent expression in the resolution of the All India Spinners Association as its meeting in 1946. The main points of this were[26] :—

(i) Introduction of hand spinning and weaving in schools;
(ii) organisation of multi-purpose Co-operative Societies with khadi as their centre;
(iii) organisation of cotton cultivation within easy excess of hand spinners;
(iv) research and training of khadi workers;
(v) making training in khadi an essential condition for recruitment of all development officers in Co-operatives, education and agriculture departments;
(vi) price control of handloom cloth;
(vii) restriction of purchase of textiles;
(viii) introduction of hand weaving and hand spinning in prisons;
(ix) exclusion of mill cloth and mill spun yarn from areas where self-sufficiency is attained; and
(x) complete ban on imports of foreign yarn and cloth.

During the first five year plan period (1951-55) the programmes

24 Gandhi M. K., *Economics of Khadi;* (1941), p. 467.
25 Gandhi M. K., *Khadi-why and How,* (1959) p. 176.
26 Jaju, S. K., *The History of the A. I. S. A.* (1950), p. 219,

relating to khadi development received sustained attention from the All-India-Khadi and village Industries Board. The Board set up an extensive organisation consisting of a central office, zonal offices and a corps of organisers.[27] As part of its long range training programme the Board started a central training institute at Nasik, with three regional institutes to provide training facilities to improved techniques of spinning and weaving. To promote the sales of Khadi a rebate of three annas on every rupee worth of Khadi sold at certified institutions and centres was allowed. The Board has the responsibility of preparing and organising programmes for the protection and development of Khadi and village industries. This includes the training of personnel, manufacture and supply of equipment and raw materials, marketing research and the study of the economic problems of different village industries. A provision of Rs. 185 lakhs and Rs. 130. 75 lakhs was orginally made on account of grants and loans respectively for the traditional Khadi industry in the whole of India. Later on, to meet the increased target of production, the original provision in the budget have been raised to Rs. 292. 10 lakhs and Rs. 136 lakhs as grants and loans respectively.[28]

During the period of second five year plan (1956-60) khadi industry received a great encouragement from the Government as well as from the public wings. In the year 1956-57 the ambar charkhas was introduced which represented a revolutionary innovation in the field of traditional Khadi. The adoption of ambar charkha (a four-spindle, hand-operated wooden spinning wheel, 21 inch long, 16 inch broad, 21 inch high, weighing about 26 lb; of simple mechanism, estimated to cost about Rs. 100 along with the carding and drawing machine),[29] evolved after much experiment. The following table will show the districtwise figures of Tirhut of traditional charkas introuced, spinners trained, production made and employment provided under traditional charckhas scheme in the year 1958-59[30]:—

Name of the Districts.	No. of Trad. Charkhas	Yarn Produced Md.	Sr.	Ch	Employed
Muzaffarpur	1,250	120	18	1½	1,350
Darbhanga	1,000	123	28	2	1,080
Saran	250	9	11	—	270
Champaran	500	16	10	8	540

27 Review of the First Five Year Plan, (1957), p. 217.

28 *Ibid.* p. 218.

29 Ahmad, E., *Bihar-Physical, Economic and Regional Geography* (Ranchi; 1965), p. 180.

30 Annual progress report of Bihar State Khadi and Village industries Board, (Patna; 1958-59) Appendix IV A, p. 23.

The khadi Evaluation Committee[31] reviewed the working of the ambar charkha programme both in its financial and physical contents. It came to certain conclusions, some of which are important enough to bear here :—

(i) output per ambar is as low as 182 hanks per day as against 6 assumed in the Khera commission;

(ii) though the earnings have increased, they have not increased in proportion to the organisational effort and investment;

(iii) at least 40% of the units are inactive and are an index of so much loss of invested capital and non-utilisation of productive capacity;

(iv) increased output per unit has in fact led to embarrassing surpluses of production and the institutions have slowed down the rate of expansion and are displaying considerable amount of reluctance to go ahead with the programme of ambar charkha development;

(v) the problem of marketing has assumed serious dimensions and in some cases large stocks of yarn and, in others, of cloth have accumulated.

During the third five year plan (1961-65) financial assistance was given to small industries by the Government, State Financial Corporation and banking institutions including the State Bank of India. As an incentive to banks and other credit institutions to lend more liberally to small scale industries, the Government of India introduced, from July 1960, a pilot scheme, for the guarantee of advances granted to small-scale industries by approved credit institutions, which was extended to the whole country from 1963 on a permanent basis. The Reserve Bank of India has been designated as the "Guarantee organisation"[32] for the purpose.

The third five year plan, in the sphere of khadi and village industries, is envisaged as largely constituting a transitional stage and the work is broadly divided into the following two parts :—

(a) ensuring continuty of activities and of development scheme already started, and

(b) reorienting the work of existing schemes and planning all future developmental programmes in line with the "Naya Morh" concept.

Physical achievements during 1961-62 and 1962-63 are significant. Because of the change in emphasis and the fact that the selected Gram Ekais were still in their organisational stage, work relating to distribution of new Ambar charkhas almost remained suspended. However, almost

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31 Report of the Khadi Evaluation Committee (February 1960), p. 50.

32 India, 1967, (Govt. of India), p. 314,

10,000 traditional charkhas and 160 Ambar charkhas[33] were distributed in the flood affected areas of the state, as a measure of relief.

From April 6, 1964 the sales relate was withdrawn and a new scheme introduced to provide facilities for free weaving of hand-spun yarn. The new scheme ensures supply of cloth to spinners in the villages who also grow cotton practically without any charge. New-grower spinners as well as non-spinners and urban consumers all benefit under the scheme which is designed to attract more and more people to spinning as well as expand the market for khadi. Several corrective measures were also introduced in recent years to remove organisational and operational problems. To improve the techniques of production and to ensure a reasonable wage to the workers, the commission has evolved a new model six-spindle charkhas, which is undergoing field trials in a few centres. A person can spin 15 metre hanks on it on an eight-hour basis.[34] The Government of India appointed a working group on khadi and village industries with the following recommendation :—[35]

(i) to make a critical review of the progress of the programmes and schemes of khadi and village industries in the Third Plan period;

(ii) to assess, in the light of the current trends and other available data, the position likely to be reached at the end of the Third Five Year Plan period; and

(iii) to formulate proposals for the fourth plan in the perspective, wherever possible of a 15 year period i. e. 1966-81.

Conclusion :—It is well known that Mahatma Gandhi used to refer khadi as "the livery of freedom". In fact, khadi was introduced in 1921 as a political weapon for the boycott of foreign goods in general and cloth in particular and thus stimulate in every Indian a desire for independence as well as an attitude of self discipline. Khadi was a vital part of the non-co-operation movement. However, Gandhiji was always alive to the economic aspects of khadi. He, therefore, emphasised the economic value of khadi as a means of finding work for spinners and weavers, as a measure of relief from the evil of widespread unemployment.

Thus, it appears that khadi industry has its own importance in the modern socio-economic life of Tirhut. Still the industry faces a variety of problems and always received the step-motherly treatment from the hands of the Government. In the present circumstances every State

33 *Bihar 1961-62*, (Public Relations Department, Patna), p, 103,

34 India 1967 (Government of India publication), p, 314,

35 Report of the Working Group on Khadi and Village Industries, September, 1964, p. 1

Government has a programme of promoting the khadi industry. Suitable subsidies and other form of State assistance should be devised to protect and promote khadi industry. The following steps should be taken :—

(a) Government should purchase as far as practicable khadi for their cloth requirements;

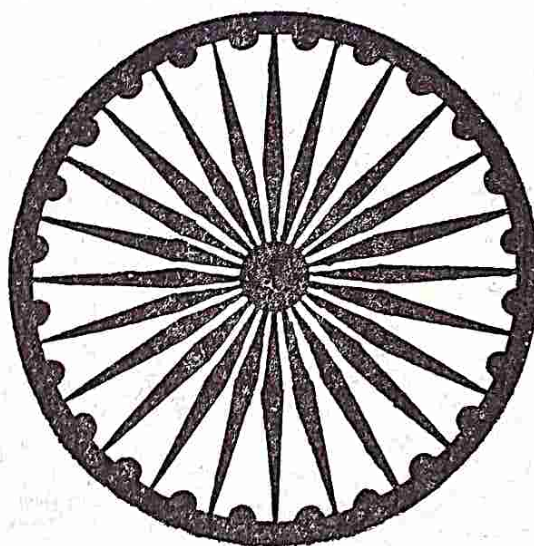
(b) Certification of khadi should be the responsibility of A. I. S. A. and allied bodies. Uncertified khadi should be allowed to be sold in the name of khadi.[36]

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